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ABSTRACT

This plan summarizes the recommendations of a special Advisory Committee on Educational Options charged with developing a strategic plan for educational options within California. The committee was appointed in Spring 1990 by State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Bill Honig, with the goal of assessing the future needs for educational options, reviewing existing options, and proposing a long-term education plan. There are six chapters. Chapter 1 outlines the plan for a sustained effort to transform California's secondary schools into a system of educational options that encourages maximum achievement and holds students and programs responsible for core educational standards. Chapter 2 summarizes the need for educational options by examining societal and student needs, including preparing for the information age, combating the skill gap, responding to ethnic and cultural diversity, engaging students, and promoting lifelong learning. Chapter 3 reviews the performance of existing programs inside and outside the public school districts. Chapter 4 presents guidelines for long-term planning gained from a review of trends and projections by representatives from education, business, and the community. Chapter 5 offers the long-term steps and 21 strategic recommendations needed to improve education for youth. Chapter 6 outlines the steps needed to carry out the strategic plan. (JPT)

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ROADS TO THE FUTURE

Strategic Plan for Education Options in the 21st Century

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Summary Report

California Department of Education
Sacramento, 1994

EA 025 797

ROADS TO THE FUTURE

Strategic Plan for Education Options in the 21st Century

Summary Report

SUBMITTED BY

Educational Options Unit
Youth, Adult and Alternative
Educational Services Division

California Department of Education

and

1990-1991 Educational Options Advisory Committee

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Letter of Transmittal

This plan summarizes the deliberations and recommendations of a special Advisory Committee on Educational Options charged with developing a strategic plan for educational options within California. This twenty-six member Advisory Committee was appointed during Spring 1990 by State Superintendent of Public Instruction Bill Honig. It was given the mission of assessing future needs for educational options, reviewing the performance of existing educational options, and proposing a long-term plan that ensures that all California youth have the opportunity to obtain the knowledge and skills that will be needed in coming decades. This project was administered by the Educational Options Unit of the California Department of Education's Youth, Adult and Alternative Educational Services Division. Pacific Management and Research Associates (**PMRA**) provided consulting services for the project.

Since Spring 1990, the Advisory Committee on Educational Options has met four times to review studies, set goals, develop and approve recommendations. During this time, two background studies were completed and reviewed by the committee. The first focused on the learning needs of the student-age population, and the second on responses of the educational institutions to these needs. These studies are:

- *Needs Assessment for California's Alternative Education Programs*
- *Review of Education Options for California's Youth*

Following review of these studies, the Advisory Committee established long-term planning goals and began a review of proposals to be incorporated into a strategic plan for educational options. This report is a working document intended to set broad goals and program directions for the future.

This plan challenges local communities to use new tools and approaches to improve the education of our youth by providing options that evoke the best for each individual. It proposes broad-scoped directions for meeting this challenge, and recommends an open and ongoing dialogue among stakeholders, at both the state and local levels, to find better ways to prepare today's youth for the world of tomorrow.

Sincerely,

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The contents of this paper do not necessarily reflect the views of the above persons or institutions they represent.

CHAPTER

1 Looking to the Future

This plan proposes a sustained effort to transform California's secondary schools into a system of educational options that provides each student with a learning environment that encourages maximum achievement and holds all students and programs responsible for core educational standards.

This plan proposes that educational options be applied to better educate today's youth for the world of tomorrow.[1]

Education for a New Era

The 1990s will be a watershed decade for education. Nowhere is this more true than in California. Two major forces must be addressed in a forthright manner.

First, California is well along the way toward a large-scale transformation from a manufacturing-based society to an information and services-based society. The basis of our lives and economy has already moved from the factory floors to offices and service outlets. Today, most of us are more involved with information and services than with the production of physical goods. In the coming years, powerful technologies will move us into a world in which electronic lines of communication are likely to become more important than the halls, offices and desks that currently give form to our lives. The quantity of information available to people and the speed at which it can be accessed will increase geometrically. Today's school-age youth are already living and responding to this world. They are becoming free of habits and perspectives borne of a past era. Our school system must respond to this transformation with educational standards and modes of learning that are relevant to the world in which students will live.

Second, California will also lead the nation in the evolution of cultural pluralism. By the end of the 1990s, there will be no "majority" racial and ethnic group within California's population. Tomorrow's population will comprise an increasingly balanced pluralism, in which no racial or ethnic group is a majority. This transformation may lead to friction among groups; but, at the same time, it will make racial discrimination increasingly unacceptable. It also opens the door to a multi-lingual and multi-cultural society that can compete fiercely in a global economy. More important than national origins and the colors of skins, diversity of racial and ethnic groups will create an unparalleled kaleidoscope of personal world views with different values, expectations and norms of behavior. Our stores, places of work, public institutions and schools must find new ways to solve the problems and pursue the opportunities created by this diversity. Our schools will be at the beachhead. They must be the gateway for assimilating diversity and teaching today's youth how to deal with diversity. Most important, they must find ways to transmit core skills, knowledge and the values for citizenship to a multi-cultural student population.

Our schools must use new techniques and tools to find multifaceted approaches for learning skills and communicating information that is of common importance to us all.

These two unrelenting social and economic trends present a paradox that must be negotiated in every aspect of our lives. On one side, the movement of our society into the "information era" requires that we not only master higher level skills, but greatly increase our ability to communicate and coordinate. On the other side, the growing diversity of our population is increasing the problems of communication and coordination. Our schools and other social institutions must improve our capacities for communication. They must use new techniques and tools to find multifaceted approaches for teaching skills and communicating information that is of common importance to us all.

[1] This report is a summary of a full length strategic plan (***Roads to the Future: Strategic Plan for Educational Options in the 21st Century***, Educational Options Unit, Division of Youth, Adult and Alternative Educational Services, California Department of Education, Sacramento, September 1991).

A New Direction for Education

Our school system is at a historic crossroads. It must do nothing less than prepare today's youth to be the stewards of tomorrow. No other institution is under more pressure to improve performance.

This plan presents a bold vision for the schools of tomorrow. It proposes the development of educational options within our school system that will be integrated with the help of information technology and will be held accountable to a common core of standards.

The initiatives proposed in this plan are built upon the cornerstones of partnerships among stakeholders, and accountability to students and the community.

The initiatives proposed in this plan are built upon the cornerstones of partnerships among stakeholders, and accountability to students and the community. The initiatives empower individuals to improve their skills, but require student commitment and achievement. They provide more freedom and resources to educators, but require greater responsiveness and accountability. They promise a better work force for business, but call for greater involvement from business. They offer a better quality of life for all, but require greater support from each of us.

History and Purpose of the Plan

This plan is a response to the changing demands being placed on California's public school system. It is the result of a long-term planning project undertaken by the Educational Options Unit of the Youth, Adult and Alternative Educational Services (**YAAES**) Division of the California Department of Education (**CDE**). It was developed under the guidance of a twenty-eight member Educational Options Advisory Committee appointed by State Superintendent of Public Education Bill Honig (**See Cover Section**).

The first charge of the project was to develop a plan for educational options within the public secondary school system. However, attention has also been given to developing a plan that addresses how our public schools might coordinate with other educational providers to serve the needs of the State and its population.

The second charge of the project was to improve the linkage between vocational education and other educational options. To meet this goal, particular attention was placed on how educational options can be used to increase the skills and learning capacities of youth oriented toward employment after high school.

This report is one of many plans being produced at the local, state and national levels. In California alone, three other state planning projects exist, undertaken from the perspective of the comprehensive high school, vocational education, and special education. All projects are grappling with the same issues from different perspectives. Ways must be found to link these efforts, reconciling differences, and identifying common directions. We present this plan with a plea and a challenge for collaborative dialogue and action among all stakeholders and perspectives.

Contents of Plan

This plan is a general road map for using the same technologies that are pushing us into an "information age" to serve the needs of school age youth who will live and work in an information society. It recommends that students be given significant choice concerning how they meet "core" educational requirements, opportunities to explore fields beyond core requirements, and increased accountability based upon systematic measures of what students learn.

The following chapters define current and future needs and describe how educational options can help our secondary school system respond to the challenges of our time. The proposals put forth are intended to ensure that our schools will be self-renewing institutions that continually adjust to meet changing needs. Six chapters deal with the following issues:

- Nature and History of the Plan
- Long-Term Needs for Educational Options
- Nature and Performance of Secondary School Programs
- Long-Term Planning Goals and Themes
- Proposals for Developing a System of Educational Options
- First Steps for Implementing Recommendations

This plan is presented with the belief that attention to the future enables us to create and shape the future.

CHAPTER

2 Long-term Needs for Educational Options

Our societal needs, and the characteristics of our school-age children, are changing dramatically. Growing diversity within our student population and the ongoing transformation of our economy require new approaches from our schools.

Today's student population is dramatically different from what it was twenty years ago, and it will change even more in the future. It is more diverse in terms of cultural, racial, familial and personal backgrounds. Equally important, the youth of today and tomorrow will face a world that is changing in fundamental ways.

This chapter summarizes the need for educational options by examining societal and student needs.[1] Identified needs are presented in five sections:

- Adjusting Schools to the Information Era
- Combating the Skill Gap
- Responding to Ethnic and Cultural Diversity
- Better Engaging All Students
- Making Learning a Lifelong Commitment

A sixth and final section of this chapter summarizes key issues and research findings.

Adjusting Schools to the Information Era

California is midstream in a transition from the "industrial era" to the "information era." This transition will cause major changes in all sectors of our society, not the least of which is education.

The technological and economic changes we are experiencing easily match the magnitude and speed of the transformation from agrarian to industrial society. This "industrial revolution" moved us from the farm to the factory, swept away the social order of feudal Europe, and fueled the democratic revolutions of 1776 and 1789.

Much can be learned about the transformations occurring in our society, and the changes that must occur in our schools, by focusing on how technological advances are realigning the ways we structure our work and daily lives.

Global technological and economic changes are shifting us relentlessly from basic industrial production to a knowledge and service-based economy, from a mechanical economic base to an information society. Much can be learned about the transformations occurring in our society, and the changes that must occur in our schools, by focusing on how technological advances are realigning the ways we structure our work and daily lives. Six axial changes are summarized below:

- **Growing Primacy of Information and Service.** Information, knowledge and skills will become the "raw materials" of tomorrow. We are now involved in a massive exodus from factories to office and service work. Manufacturing will not become less important. Rather, far fewer people will work in factories and the nature of work in the manufacturing sector will shift from manual labor to technical maintenance of automated machinery.

- **Open and Interactive Flow of Information.** Electronic data bases, telecommunications and microprocessors will enable us to access and use information on a much grander scale than in the past. Information will flow from many sources, take many media forms, and move at breakneck speeds. It will be difficult to centrally control and

[1] This Chapter is a summary of a longer background paper (Fred Best, Eric Margolis, and Van Woolley, ***Educational Needs Assessment for California's Youth***, Pacific Management and Research Associates, Sacramento, California, May 1990).

direct information. Communication will be two-way and interactive.

- **Increasing Speed of Social Change.** The explosive flow of information will catalyze rapid social change in all areas of our lives. Technological and social innovation will increase. These changes will be assimilated and cause acceleration of further change.

- **Higher, Different and Changing Skill Requirements.** Our ability to understand and use technology and information will determine our success as individuals and society. Most jobs, and the general demands of life, will require higher levels of skill. Further, the skills we will need in the future will be different from those required in the past. And they will continue to change. Education will no longer be completed in youth. Lifelong learning and "learning a living" will be commonplace.

- **Move to Diversity and Individualization.** The flow of people, ideas and resources will combine to foster a trend away from the conformity and standardization that typified the "industrial era." Information will cultivate innovation, experimentation and diversification. Our tools and productive equipment will enable us to make products customized for individuals.

- **Trend to Decentralization.** The flow of information, complexity of organizations, and diversity of our society will become impossible to coordinate centrally. Administrative apparatus and decision making hierarchies will give way to the coordination of our society through the "market-like" flow of information. Electronic information systems will work within preset decision rules to assist individuals in making decisions and taking actions without "supervision."

We are moving from a society where individuals are organized around tools, products and services to a world where resources are organized around individuals.

If there is one overarching theme, it is the shift away from heavy machinery that makes standardized products and services for the "masses." In its place, we are developing flexible and increasingly miniaturized tools and equipment that use stored information to produce goods and services that are tailored increasingly to the individual. We are moving from a society where individuals are organized around tools, products and services to a world where resources are organized around individuals.

These changes are certain to increase the need for educational options. In the past, educational options arose to meet the special needs of portions of the student population. In the future, educational options must meet the needs of both students and a changing society.

Combating the Skill Gap

Our schools must combat a growing "skill gap." This gap lies between the skills of our population and the increasing demands of work and life.

Tomorrow's jobs will require higher skills. One recent study found that 41 percent of the jobs in 2000 will be in higher skilled occupations, compared to 24 percent in 1984.

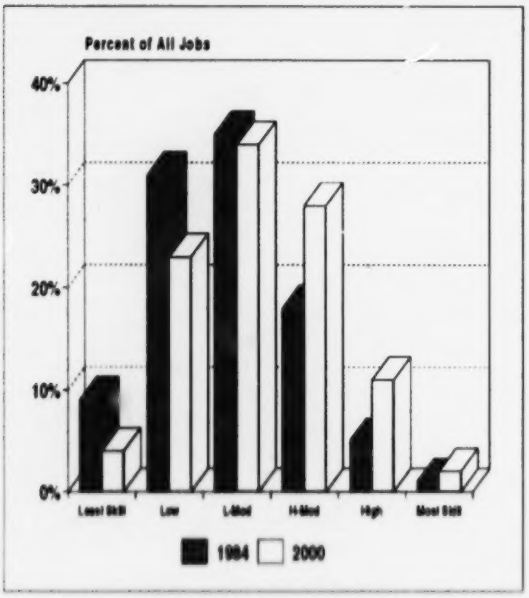
This "skill gap" is, in large measure, the result of the transition from an industrial to an information-based society. The California workforce has already left the farm. The state remains an agricultural power, yet due to technology-based productivity gains, scarcely three percent of the state's workers hold jobs in this sector. Technological change and international competition have also reduced the proportion of workers in manufacturing—from 26.9 percent in 1960 to 18.9 percent in 1985, to a projected 17.6 percent by 1995. Employment in the information and service sectors is predicted to climb from the 1960 level of 14.5 percent to 27.4 percent in 1995.

Tomorrow's jobs will require higher skills. One recent study found that the median amount of education required for employment in 2000 will be 13.5 years compared to 12.8 years in 1984. By the year 2000, 41 percent of the jobs will be in higher skilled occupations, compared to 24 percent in 1984 (**Exhibit 2.1**).

The job skill requirements of the future will not only be higher, they will be different. New occupations are being created, and new technologies are shifting the job specific skills of long standing occupations.

Exhibit 2.1

Distribution of Jobs by Skill Level Groups, 1984, 2000



Source: ***Workforce 2000: Work and Workers for the 21st Century***, Hudson Institute, Indianapolis, June 1987, pages 96–101.

The increasing skill requirements of life and work are not being matched by increasing skill attainment. Between 1977 and 1987, the average years of schooling among California adults over age 25 has shifted upward slightly from 12.2 to 12.5 years. Despite this gain, the average level of skill attainment will not match the skill requirements of the future. Some 79 percent of California's workforce of the year 2000 is already in the labor market. This workforce has a median educational attainment of 12.5 years—1 year lower than the average 13.5 years of schooling needed for the year 2000.

More important, educational achievement has not been equal among our population. There are significant differences among racial and ethnic groups. Most notably, Hispanics commonly fail to complete junior high school, while other racial-ethic groups averaged a high school education or more. In 1987, some 21 percent of adults over age 25 had not completed high school, and 12 percent had completed no more than 8th grade. There are "pockets" of serious skill deficiency within our population.

Skill deficiencies among "pockets" of our population are being exacerbated by increases in student dropout rates. For California as a whole, students who start ninth grade, but fail to complete twelfth grade have increased from 20 percent in 1970 to over 30 percent in 1990. While some school-age youth who fail to earn a high school diploma at age 18 return for a GED or other equivalency certification, most do not.

The increasing skill requirements of life and work are not being matched by increasing skill attainment.

Another indicator of faltering skill attainment comes from studies of illiteracy. A study conducted by SRA Associates estimated that 15 percent or 3.1 million of California's 20 million citizens over age 14 had "significant literacy performance deficiencies" in 1987. These estimates indicate significant variations of illiteracy related to ethnic and racial classification. Some 23.9 percent of Hispanics, 26.5 percent of blacks and 28.3 percent of Asians over age 14 were estimated to have literacy deficiencies. While only 9.8 percent of whites had literacy deficiencies, they constituted the largest absolute numbers of illiterate persons. This study stresses that these estimates of literacy deficiencies are conservative.

The seriousness of the gap between skill attainment and skill requirements will be intensified by a shortage of young entry-level workers. The age group following the large "baby boom" generation is smaller. There will be fewer entry level workers in coming years. Further, a disproportionate number of California's younger population come from minority and immigrant backgrounds that tend to be deficient in English and other basic skills.

Responding to Ethnic and Cultural Diversity

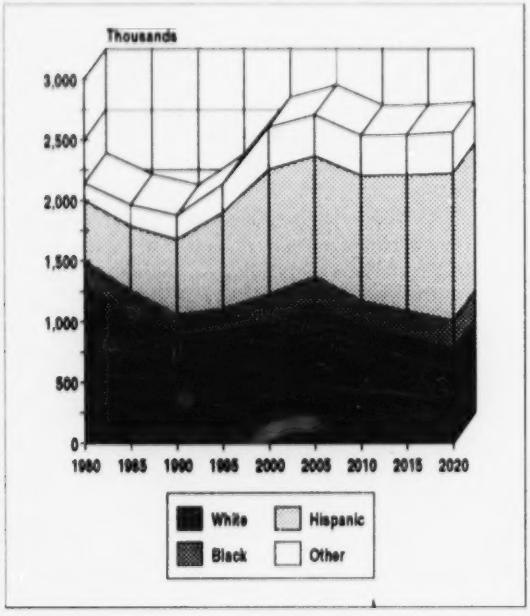
One of the most profound changes occurring in California is the transformation to a demographically balanced, multi-cultural state. Four great cultures and a multitude of racial groups are converging to produce a society where no culture or race is the majority. This will bring different world views, values and ways of life to our schools. This change will require a different educational atmosphere, and a variety of instructional approaches.

One of the most profound changes occurring in California is the transformation to a demographically balanced, multi-cultural state. Youth will bring different world views, values and ways of life to our schools.

Projections of California's school-aged population dramatize the trend toward a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic pluralism. The proportion of students who are white will decline. In the 1980 census, whites were a clear majority, about 61 percent of the high school age population. By 2020, whites will decline to slightly more than 30 percent. The black population will increase more slowly than the overall rate. In contrast, the number of Asians and Hispanics will increase dramatically. Persons of Hispanic origin will become the largest group in California high schools. They comprised 32 percent of the 15–19 year old cohort in 1980 and will grow to 47 percent in 2020. The "others" category, primarily Asians and Pacific Islanders approximately doubles from less than 7 percent to over 13 percent (**Exhibit 2.2**).

Exhibit 2.2

Youth by Race, Ages 15–19, 1980–2020



Source: California Department of Finance.

Each racial and ethnic group was influenced by unique historical experiences. Students from different racial and ethnic backgrounds do not, on average, share equal social and economic advantages. Equally important, they have different values, norms of behavior and expectations about how the world works. These differences shape social expectations and orientations toward education.

One of the most important differences among racial and ethnic groups is language. Students with Limited English Proficiency (**LEP**) constitute one of the fastest growing parts of our school population. Almost 30 percent of all California school children report that a language other than English is spoken in their homes. The proportion of Limited English Proficiency students has increased from 7 to 14 percent between 1985 and 1989. Since the proportion of LEP students is higher in lower grades, there will be further growth of this group.

Closely related to LEP status is immigrant status. Some 20 percent of California's population are foreign born. This means that a significant part of the student population are either immigrants or first generation Americans. This group of students have only begun to assimilate the language, customs and values of American schools and society.

Language and other cultural characteristics impact educational attainment. Most notably, Hispanics have consistently lower educational levels than all others. Educational attainment for this group is increasing, but slowly. Hispanics averaged 9 years of schooling in 1981 and 9.5 years in 1988. For African Americans, and others (*e.g.* Asians, Pacific Islanders and Native Americans), average attainment was about 12.5 years of school in 1988. This was only one year less than the white level of 13.4.

The increasing racial, ethnic and cultural plurality of the California population requires a variety of educational approaches to attract and educate our increasingly diverse student population.

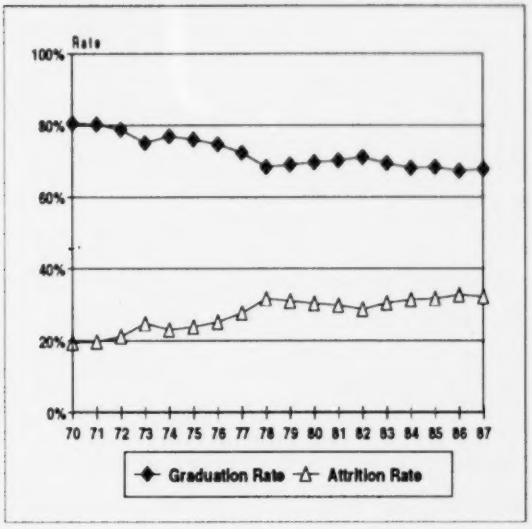
Better Engaging All Students

One of the most striking trends of our time is the growing number of youth who either drop out of school or graduate from high school with major skill deficiencies. Clearly, these problems are most prevalent among those from disenfranchised and less privileged groups. But they also affect those from "middle class" backgrounds. There is a critical need to better engage *all* students.

The problem of "disengaged" students is manifested most vividly by school dropout rates. California's dropout rate is estimated by comparing the number of students who enter the ninth grade to the number who graduate four years later. While this dropout measure has many shortcomings,[2] it provides a relatively acceptable measure of student disaffection for the state as a whole. Available data suggest that for the period between 1976 and 1987 the dropout rate inched up from 31.0 percent for the 1976–1980 period to 32.7 percent for the 1983–1987 period. Depending on what information is collected and how that information is analyzed, dropout estimates range from 15 to 57 percent (**Exhibit 2.3**).

Exhibit 2.3

California High School Graduation Rates and Trends, 1970–1987



Source: California Department of Education.

On the whole, California dropouts are more likely to be youth of color, and to be from low socioeconomic families. The attrition rate is higher for minorities than for whites—although in total numbers, more whites drop out. In 1988, statewide data show that black and Hispanic rates were over 46 percent while the rate for whites is only slightly over 26 percent.

Today, a staggering proportion of our school-age youth confront major barriers to learning.

Males drop out slightly more frequently than females, but for different reasons. Males, enticed by the prospect of making money, drop out to go to work. Females drop out because they are pregnant and have limited child care options.

Today, a staggering proportion of our school-age youth confront major barriers to learning. These "at-risk" youth confront one or more of the following problems:

- **Youth in Poverty.** Almost one-quarter of our youth under age 18 live below the poverty level. As many as 25,000 California youth are homeless. Even for those children with a place to live, inadequate housing, poor nutrition and a lack of personal safety often creates an environment making productive study impossible. Some of these teenagers must work to help support the family or remain at home to care for siblings while other family members work. The stresses placed on families by simple economic survival may make education appear to be a luxury. The realities of poverty produce formidable barriers to educational opportunity.

- **Youth from Families Under Stress.** Families under stress are a major cause of disenchanted and disaffected young people. Drug use, child abuse, and neglect are major factors. These factors are not confined to families living in poverty. The average American family has been subjected to enormous changes. Today, two income families are the norm. In 1989, the percentage of families with two members in the labor force was 44.8 percent. An additional 29.1 percent of families were female single head of household. Two income families and single parent families have been forced by economic necessity to delegate early socialization to outside agencies. The mass media, especially television, has assumed new socialization functions. While these changes may not have caused the crisis, they may work against its solution.

[2] Attrition therefore includes family mobility, transfer to other public school programs or private schools, etc. The attrition rate does not provide an accurate account of dropouts. According to a 1987 study, ***Dropouts in America,*** "In California, a public policy organization interviewed some 1,900 recent dropouts and found that, in many instances, their departure was not reflected in the enrollment statistics...The underestimation of the dropout rate on the local level raises serious issues of public accountability. Until a uniform and accurate system of calculating the dropout rate is developed by local school systems, dropout prevention efforts will continue to be directed toward a small number of 'troubled teens' rather than the majority of students." Andrew Hahn and Jacqueline Danzberger with Bernard Lefkowitz. (***Dropouts in America,*** Institute for Educational Leadership, Washington D.C., 1987).

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- **Foster Youth.** Most foster youth have been removed from their homes due to abuse, neglect, or abandonment. Foster youth are moved from placement to placement, school to school. The impact on educational attainment is startling. Some 50 percent must repeat at least one year of schooling; 75 percent are performing below grade level; 50 percent change schools every six months; and most do not have enough credits to graduate by the age of 18.

- **Youthful Offenders.** Many youth confront problems stemming from exposure to crime and their own criminal records. "Youth offenders" can be classified as those who have actually been convicted of a crime, are on parole or in penal institutions, or those who have committed "status offenses." Between 1980 and 1989, the overall population of 15 through 19 year-olds decreased by 11.7 percent. During the same period, there was a 16 percent increase in the number of 15 through 19 year-olds in penal institutions or on parole. Youthful offenders are overwhelmingly male and non-white.

- **Substance Abusers.** Substance abuse, via alcohol or drugs, is a serious cause of student failures. One national study found that half of high school youth use alcohol, and that a quarter have used illicit drugs. While data concerning substance abuse in California has limitations, available information reveals that it is a clear and present danger to both the educational and life success of today's youth. Students dealing with substance abuse problems—particularly those with personal problems—unquestionably need special education and support programs to both stop their own abuse and to prevent its spread to others.

- **Teenage Pregnancy and Parenthood.** The number of births to unmarried teenagers is rising rapidly. Since 1980, births to unmarried teenagers have outnumbered those to married teenagers. The chance of becoming an unmarried teenage mother ranges from about one in a thousand for white, highly educated teens from upper income two parent families to one in four for black teens with low educational attainment from poor female-headed families. In 1988, 47 percent of California births to unmarried women under age 20 were to Hispanics, 33 percent to white non-Hispanics, 15 percent to blacks, and 6 percent to Others. Pregnancy and parenthood place many financial, emotional and time pressures on any parent. These pressures are particularly difficult for teenage parents. An estimated 14 percent of all statewide high school attrition is caused by pregnancy.

- **Children of Migrant Farm Workers.** Because of its enormous agricultural economy, California is home to a large migratory work force of farm laborers. For the 1989–90 school year, the total number of migrant students (including eligible 3 and 4 year-olds as well as 18–21 year old non-graduates) was 195,000. Male and female students were equally represented. Eighty percent are minorities, many do not have adequate English skills for classroom participation, and their families have low economic status. It is often necessary for these youth to work to help support the family. The Charles Stewart Mott Foundation's national study of youth-at-risk concluded that migrant students are twice as likely to become high school dropouts as stable students.

- **Special Education Pupils.** At the end of 1989, special education students in California made up 4 percent of the 15–19 cohort, over 80,000 students. The majority of the special education population have specific learning disabilities (71 percent). Less common disabilities are deafness, visual handicaps, hearing impairments, and deaf-blindness. Disabled students frequently do not fit into the "regular" program. This has worked to lower their level of educational attainment. For example, of California residents who have completed only 8 years of schooling, 27 percent are disabled. Among other things, this suggests that disabled students abandon the system because the facilities provided by the state do not sufficiently address their needs.

Most discussions about the dropout problem emphasize students confronting problems linked to race, poverty and other social inequities. However, research on dropouts asserts "mainstream" students are also "at-risk."

Most discussions about the dropout problem emphasize students confronting problems linked to race, poverty and other social inequities. However, research on dropouts asserts "mainstream" students are also "at-risk." There is cause to believe that youth from middle income families, gifted students and white students also need new approaches to education and options to choose the most promising approach.

In California, the state's largest ethnic group, whites, also represent the largest absolute number of dropouts. Dropouts also come from the families of blue collar workers, white collar workers, and traditional middle class neighborhoods. Since 8

percent of whites live below the poverty line, California's white dropout rate of 25 percent must include youth other than those from low income families.

Research suggests three main reasons for white suburban dropouts. First, some students are alienated by the structure of the secondary school; they do not "bond" to the school and dislike it enough to leave. Second, students may experience overwhelming personal problems relating to family life in adolescence. Third, employment is an attractive alternative to school for some students. Teen pregnancy is also a major contributing factor for white female dropouts.

Students who learn at a quicker pace or are academically advanced often experience boredom and frustration. These "bright-but-bored" students may go to a community college or create personal educational programs. For others, their boredom in school may spell the end of their formal education.

Discussions about "at risk" youth commonly break the student population into analytically distinct components. This masks the reality that many students are in multiple risk groups. They may be minority, gifted and talented, and extremely alienated, or low income and from an abusive family situation and engaged in substance abuse. Recognition of the diversity and multiplicity of "at risk" status challenges our school system not only to provide a variety of programs, but to combine the resources of these programs to meet individual needs.

Making Learning a Lifelong Commitment

There are growing signs that we should increase the flexibility with which we schedule education over our lifetimes. High school, and most other educational institutions, are organized around the principle that an individual should complete his or her formal schooling during youth or early adulthood. This lockstep progression through school has contributed to the prevalence of a "linear lifeplan," in which most of us progress step-by-step from education in youth, to work in midlife, to leisure in old age.

A number of factors suggest that today's prevailing pattern of a four-year high school education with graduation at age 18 no longer meets the needs of our times.

Who we are, what we do, and how we think are changing dramatically. These changes compel us to reexamine the ways we have organized our schools, and ask whether the schools of today can meet the needs of tomorrow.

Changes in our world, and a better understanding of different learning styles among an increasingly diverse student population, indicate that a key dimension of educational options should be choice in the timing of education during youth and throughout life. For the high school student, education should be viewed as something that does not end at age 18, but continues throughout life.

Key Findings

The future of high schools and educational options will be forged by a variety of emerging and continuing trends and forces. In broad brush strokes, these forces can be grouped into six key categories:

- **Adjust Schools to the Information Era.** California is in the middle of a transformation from an industrial society to an "information society." This is causing an incongruity between the world youth live in and the schools they attend. Standardized classroom instruction via lecture may be inefficient and boring to students who interactively gain rapid access to information and resources in other areas of their lives.

- **Combat the Skill Gap.** The skills and knowledge currently attained by major pockets of our school-age and adult populations are not adequate to the demands of work and life in the future. Schools must find ways to ensure that all students attain the basic skills required to learn throughout their lives, and to improve their skill and knowledge achievement beyond basic skills.

- **Respond to Ethnic and Cultural Diversity.** California is well on its way to ethnic-racial pluralism in which no group has "majority" status. This diversity creates a myriad of personal values, cultures and world views of how society works. Schools must find ways to build a common ground of skills and communication while also making both the content and process of education relevant to individuals with diverse backgrounds and viewpoints.

- **Better Engage All Students.** Every youth has special interests and abilities that represents not only their personal strengths, but links of relevance that makes other educational activities worthwhile. Some students learn more intellectually and logically and others more holistically and affectively. Educational options are necessary to provide individuals with a range of approaches for better matching the instructional process to individual modes of learning.

- **Make High School Programs Pertinent to the Needs of "At-Risk" Students.** One of the most striking trends of our time is the number of youth that are dropping out of school or graduating with inadequate skills. A major cause of this crisis in educational attainment is that large portions of our youth confront major personal and social problems (*e.g.* poor family environment, poverty, criminal activity and records, substance abuse, teenage parenthood, and disabilities). These "at-risk" youth need educational options which provide support to overcome specific problems, opportunities for remedial learning if needed, and a fluid linkage to the "mainstream" population.

- **Make Learning a Lifelong Commitment.** The prevailing pattern of scheduling high school education within a four-year period may not be realistic. Restraining graduation to age 18 puts emphasis on "social promotion" rather than skill achievement. Individuals have different timetables for maturation and learning. Many students must work while attending school, and need to spread their schooling over a longer period. "Lifelong learning" is necessary to keep pace with our "information society."

We must re-examine the ways we have organized our schools, and ask whether the schools of today can meet the needs of tomorrow.

California leads the nation in several key trends that will change education. The state population and technical-economic foundations of our society are undergoing major transformations. Who we are, what we do, and how we think are changing dramatically. We must re-examine the ways we have organized our schools, and ask whether the schools of today can meet the needs of tomorrow.

CHAPTER

3 Today's Programs and Their Performance

Today's high school is not a monolith. In reality, it is a cluster of options serving a variety of individual needs and social groups.

To move successfully into the future, we must understand how schools became what they are today, and the forces pushing us to change. This chapter addresses these questions by assessing the role of educational options within the context of the high school and other programs serving youth.

California's educational system is a collection of options. There is, in reality, no "traditional" or "mainstream" school program. Rather, today's elementary and secondary schools are a collection of programs designed to meet the needs of multiple student populations. Further, this school "system" is surrounded by numerous programs beyond the jurisdiction of school districts. These programs comprise a "system" of options for students, but they also represent alternatives that are not clearly integrated, fully accessible, nor consistently accountable.

California's educational system is a collection of options.

In order to provide an overview of all educational resources available to California's youth, programs have been grouped into three categories:

- Educational Programs "Outside" Public School Districts
- Educational Programs and Options within Public School Districts
- Educational Options within Public School Districts Established Parallel to the Mainstream School System

This chapter has four sections. The first three sections provide an overview of the above listed categories of educational programs. The final section summarizes key findings.[1]

[1] This chapter is a summary of a more detailed background paper (***Review of Educational Options for California's Youth***, Educational Options Unit, Division of Youth, Adult and Alternative Educational Services, California Department of Education, Sacramento, September 1990).

Programs Outside Public School Districts

The California Department of Education (**CDE**) and local school districts are not the sole providers of instruction for youth. There are a number of programs delivered through institutions other than school districts:

- **Private Schools.** In 1988-89, there were 6,882 private elementary and high schools in California serving 524,722 students. Between 1984 and 1988, the number of private schools increased 50 percent. Private school enrollment, however, declined as a percentage of total enrollment in California schools.

- **California Conservation Corps (CCC).** CCC fosters youth "work-ethic" development and environmental conservation. CCC applicants must be between the ages of 18 and 23, not on parole or probation, California residents, and willing to work hard. Those without diplomas can take GED courses. All participants practice writing skills by keeping a journal. Presently there are approximately 2,100 corps enrolled.

- **Job Corps.** Job Corps is a nationwide vocational training program for disadvantaged youth. It is directed and funded by the federal government. It is an expensive program, primarily because it is a residential program providing comprehensive education and socialization. Participants must be between 16 and 22 years old. There are 4,100 participants in the region that includes California, Arizona, Nevada, Hawaii and the Pacific Island Territories.

- **Correctional Programs.** Educational options are not always voluntary. Three major "custodial" settings include Juvenile Hall, Camps and Ranches, and California Youth Authority (**CYA**). All are 24-hour facilities. In 1990, the average

daily population of youths in out-of-home placements was approximately 23,600. They all administer many educational activities.

- **Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA).** JTPA is a federally funded program that targets training to people with barriers to employment, especially economically disadvantaged, as well as others (*i.e.* limited English or reading skills, handicapped, poor). Almost half of California participants are under 20. JTPA programs are administered under the direction of 51 Private Industry Councils (**PICs**) across the state. JTPA programs provide bilingual education, remedial education, vocational and on-the-job training, GED preparation; and other instructional services. Training is delivered through adult schools, community colleges, and other providers. In 1988–89, JTPA funds budgeted to California totaled $302 million.

- **Greater Avenues to Independence (GAIN).** GAIN was initiated in the 1980's to provide education and training to move welfare recipients toward employment and self-sufficiency. It attempts to systematize existing resources from various agencies. Only 5,029 (5.7 percent) of GAIN participants are under 20 years of age.

- **California Compacts.** A Compact is a joint venture between educators, business, government, and communities. The California Compacts were established to help "at-risk" students complete high school. Funds to coordinate these compacts are raised locally. These programs provide instruction in basic academic skills, basic vocational skills, job readiness skills, work experience, and motivational activities.

Comprehensive high schools governed under local school districts provide the vast bulk of instruction to California's youth. However, there are other programs outside the jurisdiction of school districts. These programs should be considered as part of long-term planning to meet the educational need of youth.

Comprehensive High Schools

This section covers comprehensive high school programs, and other interventions and instructional strategies that are available to high school students.

This section has three parts. The first reviews the history of today's high school. The second part looks at today's high school as a "sum of its parts." The third part describes a variety of "mainstream" programs or options that exist within the comprehensive high school.

A Brief History of the High School

The "comprehensive public high school" developed in response to the rapid industrialization of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

In the early days, public education enrolled only a small fraction of the youth population. In 1910, only 10 percent of teenage youth were enrolled in high school. Starting in the 1920s, schools attracted working class students by placing more emphasis on basic skills, citizenship, and preparation for working life. However, it was not until the 1950s that more than half of high-school-age youth actually obtained a high school diploma.

During the 1950s, higher priority was placed on preparing students for college. The *National Defense Education Act* (**NDEA**) encouraged more rigorous courses. Larger high schools evolved to apply "economies of scale" in providing laboratories, equipment, and specialized courses. High schools looked increasingly to higher education for models of instruction.

Despite enormous technological and cultural changes over the last 70 years, the role the typical high school remains the same. The high school is still expected to preserve and transmit knowledge and skills, sort and select, socialize and assimilate, and provide custodial care.

During the 1960s, the "baby boom" generation created the largest high school classes ever seen. Changing demographics, and the civil rights movement, brought increasing numbers of "minorities" into the high school. Despite the inclusion of formerly disenfranchised groups, high schools seemed to breed alienation and anomie faster than academic excellence.

In the 1970s and 1980s, dropout rates increased steadily and skill achievement declined to the point where failures within our schools made the United States a "nation-at-risk." Today, educators, business leaders and citizens call for a restructuring of our schools.

Despite enormous technological and cultural changes over the last 70 years, the role the typical high school remains the same. The high school is still expected to preserve and transmit knowledge and skills, sort and select, socialize and assimilate, and provide custodial care. Despite this consistency of purpose, a number of options have emerged to meet compulsory attendance requirements, graduation requirements, and a variety of special needs.

Overview of Comprehensive High School

The official mission of the high school, as stated in the *California Education Code* (Section 51228), is to prepare students for citizenship and admission to California public universities or entry-level employment upon graduation. In reality, the goal of preparing students for college receives the greatest attention. This emphasis is apparent in the high school's organization, standards, curriculum, and performance measures.

Organization, Activities and Funding

The organization of today's high school is relatively consistent. High schools are regulated by state laws and local school boards. They are either part of a unified school district or a high school district. Unified districts cover grades K–12 whereas high school districts cover grades 7–12 or 9–12. Each high school has a principal and several assistant principals.

High school curriculum is focused on the college-bound and offers fewer opportunities for students who go directly to work after graduation.

To a large degree, graduation and college entrance requirements determines the activities of the high school. The most important of these activities are instruction, curriculum development, and tracking.

- **Instruction.** High school instruction usually takes the form of a traditional classroom-lecture format which is scheduled into five to seven course periods each day. School days almost always match the standard adult work week. The typical teacher instructs 150 to 160 students per day, 25 to 35 students to a class. This format accommodates college entrance subject matter requirements, and defines the instructional day for college bound students, and workweek conditions for non-college bound students.

- **Curriculum.** A major focus of the school reform movement nationwide has been to increase high school graduation standards and college entrance requirements. In 1983, California *Senate Bill 813* established a statewide "core curriculum" that increased advanced course offerings and reduced offerings in areas not required for college entrance, such as vocational education. To get a diploma, students must complete three years of English, one year of foreign language or art, two years of mathematics, two years of natural science, three years of social studies, and two years of physical education.

- **Tracking.** While "tracking" is opposed by many, it is a reality. For the most part, approximately 10 percent of high school students are placed in programs for the "gifted or honors groups", 35 percent are "college prep", 45 percent are on the "general" track, and 20 percent are in "remedial" programs. For the most part, students are placed into tracks according to results on standardized tests, their post-secondary plans, and teachers recommendations. Tracking students into separate sequences of courses is a fundamental organizing principle of the standard high school and a powerful sorting mechanism.

For the most part, instruction within today's high school takes place as classroom lectures scheduled into five to seven class periods a day. This instruction has become increasingly focused on academic studies.

Student Characteristics

In 1988–89, there were 1.3 million students enrolled within California secondary programs in grades 9–12. High school enrollments overall have been relatively stable in the 1980's, but a closer look at grade by grade enrollment reveals that there has been growth in grades 9 and 10 (**Exhibit 3.1**).

The "school-aged" population is growing, and about one-third of this population is not in school. The California population aged 15 to 19 is expected to grow 53 percent in the 1990s—from about 1.7 million in 1990 to about 2.6 million in the year 2000. Projections from the California Department of Finance show that enrollment for grades 9 through 12 is expected to increase from 1.3 million in 1989–90 to 1.8 million in 1998–99. This represents a 42 percent increase—half a million new students entering California schools between 1989–90 and 1998–99.

Exhibit 3.1

California High School Enrollment by Grade Level, 1981 to 1989

Year	1980–1981	1984–1985	1988–1989
Total	1,318,713	1,305,148	1,306,077
Grade 9	327,029	364,166	356,645
Grade 10	332,489	352,756	338,785
Grade 11	317,141	307,314	313,893
Grade 12	274,831	254,211	257,327
Ungraded	67,223	26,701	39,427

Source: ***Enrollment Data,*** California Department of Education, Sacramento, 1982–1983, 1984–1985 and 1988–1989.

Racial and ethnic diversity will increase among enrolled students. However, high dropout rates among Hispanic and black students attenuates this diversity. In 1985, the ethnicity of students enrolled in grades 9–12 was 9 percent Asian, 58 percent white, 23 percent Hispanic, and 10 percent black. In 1988, racial ethnic breakdown of graduating students was 11 percent Asian, 60 percent white, 20 percent Hispanic, and 8 percent black. These trends show that the proportion of non-whites in school is lower than the proportion in the total school aged population.

Along with increasing ethnic diversity among students, more students are coming to school with a primary language other than English.

Along with increasing ethnic diversity among students, more students are coming to school with a primary language other than English. The percentage of students enrolled in grades 7 through 12 who were classified as (**LEP**) increased from 6 percent in 1981 to 11 percent in 1989. Sixty-five percent of LEP 9–12 graders speak Spanish, and 35 percent speak other languages.

Impacts and Performance

Available data indicate that California high schools are doing a good job of preparing students for college. However, there are indications that high schools may not be adequately serving a large portion of the student body—especially non-college prep employment-bound students.

The overall performance of high schools can be measured in terms of graduation rate and statewide assessment test scores:

- **Graduation Rates.** Roughly 70 percent of high school students enrolled in 9th grade graduate and receive a diploma, while 30 percent leave without graduating. This graduation rate has been eroding steadily in California — from 80 percent in 1970 to 70 percent in 1987. Notably, most dropouts come from the ranks of general track students, the forgotten "middle" of the high school student population.

- **California Assessment Program.** The California Assessment Program (**CAP**) is the second major measure of overall high school performance. The results of these tests has shown improved achievement among college bound students, but fews gains among the remaining students. It is noteworthy that not all 12th graders take the CAP test.

All in all, it cannot be said that California high schools are performing well. Over a third of those who start 9th grade do not graduate by age 18, and there are indications that significant numbers who complete high school may not have adequate skills and knowledge.

All in all, it cannot be said that California high schools are performing well.

High schools appear to be succeeding in preparing students for college. However, these indicators of success must be tempered with the realization that high dropout rates are reducing the overall pool of students and thereby enhancing the proportion of students meeting college requirements.

There are very few measurements of the success of high schools in preparing students for employment, and measures that do exist are inadequate. However, surveys to determine employer satisfaction with the knowledge and attitudes of recent high school graduates have generally indicated that employers are not satisfied with the skills of recent graduates.

In sum, the performance measures for high schools indicate progress in preparing California students for four year college, but continued weakness in preparing the employment-bound general track student.

Options Within Today's High School

Today's high school is not a monolith. In reality, it is a cluster of options to serve a variety of individuals and groups. Some programs operate within the comprehensive high school itself. Some are available though separate institutions. These educational options include programs, instructional strategies, and interventions.

Today's high school is not a monolith. In reality, it is a cluster of options to serve a variety of individuals and groups.

Some of the most important educational options within today's high school include Magnet Schools, Programs for the Gifted, Employment Related Education, Special Education, Summer School, Migrant Education, Bilingual Education and LEP Programs, Adult Education, Dropout Prevention and Recovery Programs, and Educational Options/Alternative Education.

- **Magnet Schools.** Magnet schools began as a means to foster voluntary integration. The term "magnet" also describes specialized schools-within-schools or programs that feature parental choice but are not designed specifically for integration purposes. These specialized schools provide enriched and concentrated instruction in areas such as the arts, science or vocational training. There may be as many as 500 K–12 magnet schools in California.

- **Programs for the Gifted.** High schools, colleges and private organizations in California offer a variety of special programs designed to help gifted and talented students reach their potential. The two most common of these programs are Advanced Placement (**AP**) and Simultaneous College Enrollment.

- **Employment Related Programs.** According to state law (*Education Code* Section 51004), high schools have a responsibility to prepare students for entry level employment. However, the trend toward a more academic curriculum and uncertainty about the purpose of vocational programs in a changing economy have reduced emphasis on employment preparation. High school employment related programs are offered primarily through vocational classes and Regional Occupational Centers/Programs (**ROC/Ps**). High school based vocational classes provide career awareness, career guidance and skill training for entry level jobs through courses offered as electives to high school students. These courses are commonly grouped into the three general areas of business education, vocational agriculture and industrial arts. ROC/Ps offer entry-level job training, career guidance, and work experience to students over age 16, with options for a small number of "at-risk" students under age 16. In recent years, ADA has stabilized around 60,000. The number of students enrolled in ROC/Ps is much greater (5–6 times) than the number in average daily attendance because many students attend part time.

- **Special Education.** Special education programs in high schools offer special instruction and services to identified students with exceptional needs such as physical disability, cerebral palsy, blindness, deafness, or a learning disability. Programs are designed to allow student with disabilities to participate to the fullest extent possible in the regular school program. Of the total K–12 enrollment in 1988–89, 9.8 percent or 128,000 were enrolled in special education.

- **Summer School.** Summer and intersession school classes are taught by high school faculty during the summer or between school sessions. This program allows high school students to make up failed courses, take required courses or electives, or select a particular teacher. Summer school enrollment was drastically reduced in 1978 after Proposition 13. Since 1984–85, summer school has grown to enroll about 20 percent of all students. Despite this growth, enrollment is still less than half of its pre-*Proposition 13* level.

- **Migrant Education.** Migrant Education provides supplementary educational services to help migrant students be successful in the regular core program. It is federally funded. Objectives of the program include improving standardized test scores in reading, mathematics and language; increasing students' grade point averages; increasing the number of students passing proficiency tests and those entering college; and decreasing the migrant drop out rate. In 1989–90, this program enrolled about 195,000 students from ages 4 to 21. Some 87 percent of these students have been Hispanic.

- **Bilingual Education and LEP Programs.** Secondary programs for Limited English Proficiency (**LEP**) students commonly include ESL classes, academic content classes taught in Sheltered English, academic content classes in the primary language of the student, and newcomer

classes that provide orientation and support services to LEP students. The number of LEP students has increased from about 180,000 to 650,000 between 1973 and 1989.

- **Adult Education.** Concurrent enrollment is a program that enables high school students to enroll in adult education classes while they are still in high school. "Concurrently enrolled" students must attend their high school for at least four hours per day. The purpose is to help students meet graduation requirements, supplement their high school program, and extend the instructional day. Enrollment has increased dramatically from less than 7,000 grade 9–12 ADA in 1980 to 23,940 in average daily attendance in 1987. The count of students concurrently enrolled is nine to ten times higher than ADA.

- **Dropout Prevention and Recovery Programs.** California *Senate Bill 65* was enacted in 1985 to reduce the high school dropout rate. One element of this initiative is the Motivation and Maintenance Program. This features an Outreach Consultant that provides dropout prevention and recovery, and coordinates school and community resources to meet the needs of at-risk students.

The last option within today's high school is "alternative" education. This option has many dimensions. It is elaborated in the next section.

Alternative Education and Other Options

This section focuses on the "alternative education" programs and schools administered by the Educational Options Unit within the Youth, Adult and Alternative Educational Services Division (**YAAES**) of the California Department of Education.

Among the findings of this chapter, one stands out. The traditional notion that there is a common school program for all students is not a reality. The issue for the future is how we integrate and plan these options.

For more than 20 years, the concept of offering a variety of educational choices has been developing into a national movement. Advocates of this vision see education as a catalog of choices for both students and teachers. Choice advocates emphasize differences in student needs and learning styles. They push for smaller class size, individualized instruction and the availability of alternative modes of learning.

Historically in California, "alternative" education programs developed in response to the perceived needs of particular student groups, needs that were not being addressed adequately by the school system.

In the 1988–89 academic year 627,659 young people were enrolled in "alternative education," nearly 14 percent of the 4,618,120 total enrollment in grades K–12.

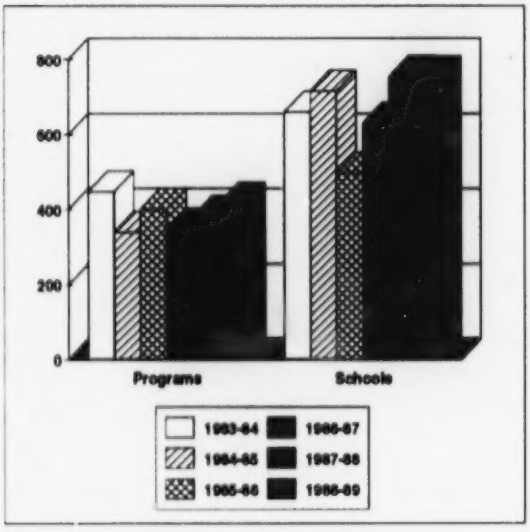
California "alternative education" programs and schools encompass a wide variety of structures, styles, and educational policies designed to serve the needs of students with different personal needs, learning styles and temperaments. Some alternatives are highly structured and highly disciplined, while others are more "student-centered," flexible and open. Some offer innovative pedagogical strategies; others follow traditional educational structures and curricula. Most alternative programs are selected voluntarily by students and their parents because they represent an appropriate strategy to gaining a quality education. Organizational structures include separate stand-alone schools, schools-within-schools, schools-without-walls, programs, and classes. These programs are typically funded from the same sources and in the same way as more traditional programs.

Current data collection procedures make it difficult to pinpoint the number and nature of educational options programs and schools. Available data indicate over 1,000 programs exist. In the 1988–89 academic year 6,356 total staff were employed in "alternative education." In that same year 627,659 young people were enrolled in "alternative education," nearly 14 percent of the 4,618,120 total enrollment in grades K–12. While the number of programs has remained more or less constant, hovering around 400, the number of schools has increased from 659 in 1983–84 to 752 in 1988–89 (**Exhibit 3.2**).

Educational options are one of many sub-systems within California's enormously complex education system. Students in educational options are not involuntarily consigned to some kind of educational ghetto. In many cases there are long waiting lists to enroll in these programs. Some of these programs include Gifted and Talented Programs, Community-Based Education, Independent Study, and a variety of curricula and extracurricular programs.

Exhibit 3.2

Number of Educational Options Programs and Schools, California 1984–1989



Source: California Basic Education Data System.

This section reviews seven of the ten strategies and programs administered by the Educational Options Unit of the Youth, Adult, and Alternative Educational Services Division (**YAAES**). These seven strategies and programs include Continuation Education, Independent Study, Opportunity Education, Partnership Academies, Court and Community Schools, Teenage Pregnancy and Parenting Programs, and Foster Youth Services.[2]

- **Continuation Education.** Continuation education is designed to meet the needs of 16 and 17 year-olds who have not graduated from high school, are not exempt from compulsory attendance, and are deemed to be "at-risk" of dropping out. The curriculum is broad based and allows individualized instruction, work-study programs, and personalized guidance and counseling. All continuation programs must educate to the core proficiencies specified in *Senate Bill 813* (1983). Continuation schools allow students to participate in other educational programs such as Regional Occupation Centers or Programs (**ROC/P**), concurrent enrollment in adult schools, and parenting teen programs. In 1989, there were 115,000 students in 440 continuation schools. The schools range in size from 20 students to 800 students.

- **Independent Study.** Independent study is open to any elementary or secondary student who is likely to achieve more in an individualized learning situation. The primary purpose for independent study is to offer a means of individualizing the educational plans of pupils whose needs may be met best through study outside of the regular classroom setting. Because independent study is an educational strategy, not a program, it can be used in comprehensive schools as well as alternative schools and programs. Students in independent study may work on their own, in a group, in the classroom or outside the school. Study may include taking courses in a high school, a college or a university extension course. Over the past four years independent study ADA has increased by about 25 percent a year (10 percent growth during 1989–90). In 1988–89, independent study represented nearly one percent of the total ADA generated in California—encompassing 728 school districts and generating a total of 36,494 units of ADA.

- **Opportunity Education.** Opportunity schools, initiated in 1977, are not purely "optional." Parallel to compulsory continuation education, youths with attendance or discipline problems are assigned to opportunity schools. The goal is "rehabilitation" by providing a supportive environment with specialized curriculum, instruction and guidance to aid students in resolving their difficulties. The primary focus is behavioral, not instructional. The objective is to return these students to the regular classroom. Services used for apportionment purposes may include: crisis counseling, specialized services for substance abuse, suicide prevention, services provided for parent and school staff education, and specialized instructional materials. It is estimated that ADA in 1988–89 was 3,270. As many as 10,000 children pass through opportunity programs each year.

- **Partnership Academies.** Partnership Academies, developed in the late 1970s, are dropout reduction programs targeting students "at-risk" of dropping out. The program provides specific job related training, summer jobs, and employment upon graduation. The academies are partnerships involving corporate sponsors, the California Department of Education (**CDE**), and local school districts. Each Academy is organized as a school-within-a-school (**SWAS**). Class size is kept small. "Hands-on" experience in job-related categories is emphasized. Intensive career counseling by

[2] Three other programs administered by YAAES, but *not* discussed in this chapter, include: *Senate Bill 65* Educational Clinics, Employment Training Panel (omitted because the program serves mostly an adult population), and Year-round education (which is not a program *per se*).

teachers and local business mentors is also provided. In 1981, two Academies opened with a total of 91 students. By 1988 there were 11 programs with 846 students.

- **Court and Community Schools.** Community Schools are maintained by the joint authority of the County Board of Education and Probationary Departments. Started in 1971, Community Schools were institutions developed to protect the general student population from contact with youthful offenders, and serve the high-risk students who were on the verge of becoming offenders. Participants are separated from mainstream students. These schools are seen as the final educational opportunity for delinquent youth who have exhausted their options at local educational agencies. Court and community schools are held to the same academic standards as other California high schools. Their aim is to establish a learning centered environment to aid students in returning to their local districts. Students are frequently involved in work experience programs. In 1989, there were 40 programs in the state and estimated enrollment was 21,695, about 1.6 percent of the total secondary school enrollment.

- **Teenage Pregnancy and Parenting Programs.** Specialized programs for pregnant and parenting teens are available within larger school districts. Two state programs, Pregnant Minors Programs (PMP) and School Age Parent and Infant Development Programs (SAPID), have been established. There are also three statewide resource centers that provide training and technical assistance to schools seeking to establish programs. Programs vary in quality, nature and duration of services contingent upon funding sources. Funding streams include ADA, categorical grants, federal and state money, and private foundation grants. The exact number of students served is unknown. However, in 1985–86 PM and SAPID programs enrolled only 25.8 percent of the estimated population of 71,700 in need of service.

- **Foster Youth Services (FYS).** FYS provide education for youths in foster homes and group homes. The common mission of all these programs is to enhance the school success of foster children through educational assessment and placement, tutoring, counseling for students and foster parents, and student advocacy and liaison with foster parents. It is estimated that there are over 80,000 school age foster children in California.

The "alternative education" programs are not separate from the "mainstream" high school. Rather, they are additional options set within the context of other options.

Alternative education programs may be models or experiments that can be used to guide needed changes in the "mainstream" high school.

These programs are distinct in that they place significant emphasis on student and parental choice, stress individual or customized study, place priority on more informal instruction, provide more flexibility in the scheduling of education, and strive to match the mode of instruction to the learning styles of groups and individuals. These traits suggest that these programs may be models or experiments that can be used to guide needed changes in the "mainstream" high school.

Key Findings

The comprehensive high school is perceived as the "mainstream" secondary education system. Most students begin their secondary education at a high school, but many do not end in a mainstream program. Alarmingly, roughly one-third do not graduate at all. In spite of the perception that most teens are being served by a common high school program, there are in reality a number of options operating within the high school context. These options offer students flexibility and innovative instruction. Many of these options have grown substantially in the 1980's.

Educational options are an increasing reality that reflect a growing diversity of students and social needs. The issue for the future is how we integrate and plan these options.

Key findings about the educational options available to California youth are provided below:

- **Data and Analysis Are Inadequate.** Data on many educational options, and secondary schools in general, is frequently nonexistent, rarely collected or analyzed on a regular basis, and commonly noncomparable among programs and options. This makes evaluation and analysis of program impacts difficult, if not impossible.

- **High Schools Are Succeeding in Preparing Students for College.** College-bound students seem to be well served by the high school. However there are questions as to whether they might be better served by more educational options.

- **High Schools Are Failing to Prepare Non-College Bound Students for Employment.** Research indicates that high schools are weak in preparing non-college bound youth for employment. Learning deficiencies (lack of basic education and the high dropout rate) indicate that high schools are not meeting basic goals. While these failures are clearly intensified by factors other than school (*e.g.* family and neighborhood conditions), high schools are failing to reach and motivate too many students.

- **High School Instruction Is Lecture-based and Classroom-bound.** While there are notable exceptions, most educational activities within high schools take place through lectures in classrooms which require students to learn in a passive mode. For the most part, classes are compartmentalized into set periods of the day creating inflexibility.

- **Many Educational Options Exist Outside the High School.** There are many educational resources outside of school districts (*e.g.* job training, community based organizations). These options provide an opportunity to obtain a greater return on resources through public/private collaboration and cross-agency coordination.

- **Public School Systems Provide a Variety of Educational Options.** Today's secondary school system is not a monolithic program. Rather it is a combination of options concerning modes and areas of learning. However, these options are not clearly defined or integrated. This makes it difficult for students, parents and school staff to understand and move among available options.

- **Core Curriculum Is Applied Unevenly.** The "core curriculum" specified by *Senate Bill 813* is mandated for all educational options within public secondary schools. However, there are indications that student educational attainment required by this core curriculum is not being achieved through all educational options.

- **Some Options Produce Positive Outcomes.** Available data indicate that the availability of options helps students improve their educational achievement and motivates "at-risk" students. However, many of these options do not have the resources for all those requiring services. There is a need for better orchestration of these options to serve the needs of today's student population.

- **Performance Measures Are Inadequate.** There is no consistent and comparable performance measure used for all educational options. For several reasons, the California Assessment Program (CAP) test is not fully used within educational options. To complicate this shortcoming, the CAP may not be applicable to all options. Nor does it allow comparison of options within schools, nor assessment of individual students.

- **Participation in Options Is Not Always Voluntary.** Participation in many educational options is not always freely chosen by students or parents. In some cases, students are assigned to educational options without choice (*e.g.* correctional programs). In other cases, students may be moved into selected options with little opportunity for choice. These conditions must be reconciled with the philosophy of individual choice articulated by advocates of "alternative education."

- **Options Can Stigmatize Participating Students.** Many educational options are viewed by students, parents, teachers and school administrators as "dumping grounds" for students with discipline problems and low academic achievement. Even in cases where educational options provide superior instruction, the fact that they are "different" from "mainstream" programs makes them suspect to many students, parents, school staff and employers. This stigmatization undercuts the value of high school diplomas from many options, discourages many students from participating in options, and makes it difficult for students to move back to "mainstream" school programs once they have enrolled in options.

- **Options Are Often Used Too Late.** There are signs that the positive impacts of many educational options are diminished because students are given access to such programs too late in the school year. This suggests a need for more flexible and timely movement among all types of educational programs.

- **Intent of Programs Are Occasionally Abused.** There are limited signs that the intent of some educational options is being abused. Most notably, there appear to be some cases where ADA reimbursement for independent study has not been matched with appropriate commitment of resources from some school districts. This suggests a conceptual problem with using a "seat time" funding system for programs based on individualized learning.

- **Growth in the Need for Educational Options Does Not Match Population Needing Options.** Review of data concerning the growth of racial-ethnic diversity and "at-risk" youth populations indicates that the quantity and quality of available educational options does not match the size of the population in need of such programs. Additionally, the transformation of the United States from a manufacturing-based to information-based society indicate that tomorrow's school systems will require more options and new approaches to engage the youth of the future.

- **Shortcomings in the Performance of High Schools Reflect Broad-based Social Problems Beyond the Control of Schools.** Many of the conditions undercutting the capacity of today's schools from evoking acceptable educational achievement from youth are beyond the direct control of schools. This means that meaningful programs to improve educational achievement must also address a broad range of social problems and changes. It also means that there must be broad-based community support and involvement with initiatives to improve educational performance.

Among the findings of this chapter, one stands out. The traditional notion that there is a common school program for all students is not a reality. Educational options exist today. But this move to options has not been deliberate nor systematic. Educational options are an increasing reality that reflect a growing diversity of student and social needs. The issue for the future is how we integrate and plan these options.

CHAPTER

4 Guidelines for the 21st Century

Review of trends and projections by representatives from education, business and the community resulted in these guidelines for long-term planning.

Advisory discussion, outreach and research have led to five general guidelines for planning educational options. These are accountability, availability of options, student choice, program and staff support, and coordination among programs:

(1) **Increase Accountability.** All educational programs and options need to be more accountable in terms of reliable measures of whether students actually master core skills and knowledge, *not* how long they sit in classrooms.

(2) **Develop a System of Quality Educational Options.** Schools must provide students with options that encompass the pace and mode of learning that best enables each individual.

(3) **Facilitate Student Choice and Achievement.** Students must have the information and freedom to move easily among all educational options according to their individual needs and achievements. All programs—and the students that attend them—should be positively regarded because they meet the same core requirements.

(4) **Enhance Staff and Program Support.** Teachers, counselors and other staff must be given resources and technical assistance to provide students with the educational experiences that enable each individual to value learning and master core skills.

(5) **Improve Planning, Coordination And Linkage.** The need to enhance the skills of our population—and the scarcity of resources—requires effective coordination within and beyond school districts to foster integration and cooperation among educational programs.

These five guidelines were derived from twenty specific themes identified by research and agreed upon the Advisory Committee on Educational Options (**Exhibit 4.1**).

Exhibit 4.1

Long-Term Planning Themes

Increase Accountability:

- Apply "Core" Standards of Performance to All Educational Programs
- Establish and Reinforce Expectations for All Students
- Increase Responsibility for Students Over Time and Among Programs
- Improve Program Data and Measures of Performance
- Design Programs to Ensure that They Meet Stated Goals

Develop a System of Quality Educational Options:

- Recognize Existence of and Need for Educational Options
- Increase Pertinence to Racial and Ethnic Diversity
- Provide Options to Meet Needs of "High Risk" Youth
- Better Engage All Students
- Make Instruction More Appropriate to "Information Era"
- Explore and Expand Alternative Modes of Instruction

Facilitate Student Choice and Achievement:

- Increase Student Awareness of Educational Options
- Ease Flow Among Educational Options for Students
- Reduce Stigma Attached to Some Educational Options

Enhance Staff and Program Support:

- Enlist the Skills and Knowledge of All Educational Staff
- Provide Resources for Staff and Program Development
- Ensure Adequate Funding

Improve Planning, Coordination and Linkage:

- Develop Consistent, Reliable and Comparable Data for All Educational Options
- Collaborate with Educational and Social Programs Outside of School Districts
- Enhance Community, Business and Parental Involvement

These themes provide direction for planning a system of educational options that builds upon existing successes and uses emerging technology to meet the needs of tomorrow.

All twenty themes represent ambitious, but essential, goals. If we are to ensure the level of learning necessary for tomorrow's adults, we must find bold and effective ways of achieving these goals for today's youth.

CHAPTER

5 A Plan for Educational Options

This plan proposes that long-term steps be taken to create a system of educational options that is accountable for core standards of student achievement, empowers students to choose options that best meet their personal learning styles, and frees schools to develop innovative programs for providing education through varied approaches.

This plan outlines fundamental changes for today's schools. It proposes that school districts work cooperatively with business, parents, and other stakeholders to improve the long-term effectiveness of high school education. It puts forth a series of integrated recommendations that will enable schools to improve student achievement by building upon the unique strengths and aspirations of each individual. Most important, it proposes that students and parents be given a choice among alternative instructional methods and environments designed to meet common standards and goals.

The Initiatives We Propose

Twenty-one recommendations are presented that together provide an interlinked system for the delivery of education to California's youth.

This chapter will summarize each recommendation, then provide an overview of how all the recommendations will work together to improve our schools.

The recommendations proposed in this plan have been developed with the intent of achieving multiple payoffs concerning the five goals of increasing accountability, developing a system of educational options, facilitating student choice, enhancing staff and program support, and improving planning and coordination (**Exhibit 5.1**).

These recommendations are presented within the context of the general planning goal to which they make the greatest contribution. However, it is emphasized that most proposals have been developed to provide multiple benefits and support many planning goals.

Exhibit 5.1
Strategic Recommendations

Increase Accountability:

[1] Support and Enhance the "Core Curriculum" for All Educational Options

[2] Set Standards and Expectations for "All" Students

[3] Measure Program Performance by What Students Learn

[4] Funding Incentives for Program Performance

Develop a System of Educational Options:

[5] Educational Options to Enhance Student Achievement

[6] Modes of Instruction to Match the "Information Era"

[7] Make Secondary Education a Stage of "Lifelong Learning"

[8] Evolution of Technology-Supported Learning Centers

[9] Test Linkage of Funding to Individual Students in Accord with Needs

Facilitate Student Choice and Achievement:

[10] Personal Education Plans (**PEPs**)

[11] Comprehensive Counseling, Guidance, Placement and Certification Services

[12] Student Access Card

Enhance Staff and Program Support:

[13] Participative Management within Schools and Districts

[14] Staff and Program Support for Innovation

[15] Initiatives to Increase Use of Educational Technology

[16] Encourage Racial and Ethnic Diversity in Teaching

Improve Planning and Coordination:

[17] State and Local Planning Councils

[18] Integrated Data System for Programs and Individuals

[19] Linkage of Support Resources

[20] Encourage Parental Involvement

[21] Business Support of Educational Standards

Increase Accountability

Accountability is more than a process that ensures that we produce what we promise. It is also the basis of understanding what we really wish to accomplish and how well our actions bring us closer to our goals.

Educational programs should primarily be held accountable in terms of how much students learn, not what programs students take or how long they study.

Four recommendations to increase accountability are proposed to ensure that schools accomplish essential goals:

[1] **Support and Enhance the "Core Curriculum" for All Educational Options.** Rigorously support and require the application of common learning goals for all educational options. All educational options providing a high school diploma must require students to achieve demonstrated mastery of the "core curriculum," as specified in California *Senate Bill 813*. These "core curriculum" must also be augmented to place greater emphasis on skills dealing with communication, team work, multiple languages, problem solving, critical thinking and basic competence with key technologies. The "core curriculum" should also support development of self-esteem and positive attitudes toward learning. The learning goals of "core curriculum" should be stated in measurable terms so that different programs, learning contexts and methods can be evaluated comparatively in terms of skills and knowledge attained by students. . .

[2] **Set Standards and Expectations for "All" Students.** Educational standards and expectations must be specified and reinforced for "all" students. Employers, educators and parents must work at the state and local levels to define the essential skills, knowledge and behavior necessary for the workforce, daily life and postsecondary studies. The identified skill and knowledge requirements should be clearly conveyed to students, and constantly reinforced by schools, parents, businesses and community organizations.

[3] **Measure Program Performance by What Students Learn.** The California Department of Education should work with local educators, business and other stakeholders to develop program performance measures based on the learning achievements of individual students. Standardized skill and knowledge assessment processes should measure student achievement in all areas of the "core curriculum" and selected electives in ways that allow comparison among varied educational options. Students should have the right to alternative assessment procedures that produce comparable data. Assessment processes should measure students' ability to transfer skills and knowledge to a variety of functional contexts. Assessment procedures must produce representative and comparable data on the skill and knowledge gains for individual students, programs, and the state.

[4] **Funding Incentives for Program Performance.** Ways should be explored to link the funding of public school programs to student achievement. This should be done by providing incentives for superior performance through revenue bonuses beyond base funding to programs with high student skill "improvement" levels documented by standardized assessment procedures.

The above four recommendations are intended to ensure that essential goals are commonly understood, that we understand the success or failure of different approaches to achieving these goals, and that incentives given to individuals and organizations truly support these goals.

Develop a System of Quality Educational Options

One of the greatest challenges for modern society in the late 20th Century is the management of diversity and individualization. Industrial society has moved from "mass products" to "product lines." Now the advent of Computer Assisted Design and Computer Assisted Manufacturing (CAD/CAM) places us at the threshold of using factory technology to make individualized products on a mass scale. This move toward choice and individualization must also occur in or schools.

Schools, like the society they serve, are moving toward more diversity and individualization. We cannot reverse this trend toward individualization and educational options. However, we can move positively to better plan and coordinate these options.

Schools, like the society they serve, are also moving toward more diversity and individualization. As society has moved from the farm to the city and suburbs, secondary education has progressed from the one-room school house to the comprehensive high school and now to countless categorical programs and increasing individualized study. Geographically and programmatically, "urban sprawl" has been matched by "educational sprawl." Racial and ethnic diversity, social problems putting many youth "at-risk," and different reactions to the "information era" demand more than "mass education". Educators and schools

have responded to this demand with countless educational options. We cannot reverse this trend toward individualization and educational options. However, we can work to better plan and coordinate these options.

This section proposes five long-term recommendations to develop a system of quality educational options.

[5] **Policies that Support Educational Options to Enhance Student Achievement.** State and local educational agencies must articulate official policies supporting the existence and integration of educational options. These policies should recognize that options are a reality within today's school systems, ensure that all educational options support the learning goals of California's "core curriculum", give priority to informing students and parents of existing educational options, and remove barriers that prevent the flow of students among options.

[6] **Modes of Instruction to Match the "Information Era."** Secondary education should be modeled after the "Information Era." Key elements include deemphasizing passive learning in favor of interactive and student-led learning, reducing lectures and standardized study plans in favor of individualized study, cutting back teacher-led lectures in favor of activities that stress group problem solving and interpersonal communication, and changing the role of teachers to stress facilitating or "coaching" rather than lecturing and managing.

[7] **Make Secondary Education a Stage of "Lifelong Learning".** The scheduling of secondary education should be made more flexible and organized as an early stage of ongoing "lifelong learning." Expectations that a high school diploma must be earned by age 18 should be abandoned. The common practice of earning a secondary diploma over a four-year period should be replaced with widespread options for graduating by demonstrating mastery of skills and knowledge. Options should be developed to increase the flexibility for scheduling and completing courses and other educational activities over days, weeks and years (*e.g.* provide evening and weekend classes, concentrated classes, *etc.*).

[8] **Support the Evolution of Classrooms into Technology-Supported Learning Centers.** Classroom instruction dedicated to "courses" of instruction should be deemphasized in favor of "learning centers" providing a variety of options for completing the requirements of the "core curriculum" and electives. Each center should be small enough to encourage community and interpersonal communication. Learning centers should provide easy access to multiple approaches for completing educational requirements and exploratory learning (*e.g.* lectures, discussion groups, interactive video, multi-media, group projects, computer assisted instruction, individual study). Instruction would be built around a variety of learning modules based on the learning goals specified in an augmented "core curriculum." Student activities should be integrated with the support of electronic information systems. These centers should allow extensive individual choice concerning approaches to learning.

[9] **Test Linkage of Funding to Individual Students in Accord with Needs.** New approaches should be tested for funding Categorical Programs by establishing a point system to ensure that revenues follow individual students on the basis of documented special needs. Funds should be allocated to school districts by paying a set dollar amount for the aggregate funding points generated by all enrolled students. Funding allocated to an individual student in accord with the point system should "follow" that student to programs he or she attends. This strategy should augment funding for special needs, provide school districts with maximum flexibility to respond to "individual" needs, and empower students and parents by linking funds to specific students.

The above five recommendations allow choice concerning the timing and mode of learning, but not the goals and standards of learning.

Facilitate Student Choice and Achievement

A critical element of educational options is choice to pursue approaches to learning that promise the greatest achievement. Students and parents must have the ongoing opportunity to review available options, then move among these options in accord with their needs, abilities and achievements.

Students and parents must have the ongoing opportunity to review available options, then move among these options in accord with their needs, abilities and achievements.

This plan proposes that the processes of choice and movement become the focal organizing principle for a system of educational options. Three recommendations are put forth to facilitate student choice and achievement.

[10] **Personal Education Plans (PEPs).** Every student should have a Personal Education Plan (**PEP**) that summarizes schools records in standardized form. It would include documentation of each student's skills, knowledge and educational

attainment, educational objectives, specification of the student's learning style, specification of support resources needed to ensure educational success, and a signed agreement with the student, parents and school concerning educational goals for the coming year. These PEPs should be reviewed once or twice every year.

[11] **Comprehensive Counseling, Guidance, Placement and Certification Services.** All schools and districts should develop comprehensive services to assess individual skill and knowledge attainment, learning style, personal needs, career and educational goals, and needs for support services. These services should also update Personal Education Plans **(PEPs)**, provide impartial and comprehensive information about educational options, assist students in choosing and enrolling in educational options, certify skill and knowledge attainment, provide a clearinghouse for centralizing non-school student background information, and maintain linkage to a statewide student data system. These services should also provide case management followup and intervention to ensure integrated delivery of needed programs and services to each student.

[12] **Student Access Card.** Explore viability of issuing a credit card-like device to each student that uses local and statewide computers to link local and statewide Integrated Data Systems, establish a common link for monitoring students and storing Personal Education Plans, facilitate access and storage of individual educational records, reduce duplication of training and assessment, ease the process of determining eligibility for special services, and use a common format to report individual educational records from varied educational options. This card would also provide students a sense of ownership over their educational achievements.[1]

These recommendations, when linked to other parts of this plan, are intended to use information technologies to create a kind of market-process within schools that organizes resources around individual students rather than students around resources.

Enhance Staff and Program Support

The success of the proposals put forth in this plan requires more than new equipment and facilities—it will require major adjustments in the ways teachers, counselors, administrators and community stakeholders carry out the activities of our high schools. New skills and perspectives must be developed, and existing relationships between students and schools must be determined.

A more systematic and comprehensive effort is needed to provide program and staff development support.

Four recommendations are proposed to assist teachers and other educational staff in preparing for the 21st Century.

[13] **Participative Management within Schools and Districts.** Local schools and districts should apply participatory management techniques to involve teachers, counselors, administrators and other staff in joint planning and implementation of educational options.

[14] **Staff and Program Support for Innovation.** Sustain and modernize state-administered services to assist educators in program design, curriculum development, staff training, and program review. These services should provide conferences, newsletters and regional technical assistance, workshops to review and redefine the roles of the teacher in tomorrow's school, toll-free technical assistance number for teachers and counselors, modem-linked computer bulletin boards with capacity to download information and software, expert systems software (*e.g.* interactive learning and counseling programs for educational staffs), video tapes and TV courses for educators, assistance for planning use of instructional technology, and review and adjustment of teacher training programs to provide additional skills (*e.g.* participative management, alternative educational techniques, brokering support services, and use of the proposed Personal Education Plans). These efforts should involve the business community in providing training in the areas of staff development, productivity measurement, accountability, participative management, and decision making.

[15] **Initiatives to Increase Use of Educational Technology.** The California Department of Education should undertake a variety of initiatives to increase the use of educational technology. These initiatives should provide technical assistance services to support development of technology plans, establish Technology Teacher Training Academy that would provide workshops and onsite training, add "computer literacy" to pre-service teacher credential programs, collaborate with private companies to develop educational software that supports "core curriculum", provide a "consumer service" that evaluates available educational technology, and work with business and other stakeholders to develop a public-private investment fund to finance technological innovation within schools.

[1] The Student Access Card concept is currently in the process of being trademarked under the name *Educard*$_{TM}$ by the Adult Education Unit of the California Department of Education to ensure that it is controlled by public education agencies.

[16] **Encourage Racial and Ethnic Diversity within Teaching Staffs.** Racial and ethnic diversity must be encouraged within teaching and other school staff in order to provide students with role models and instructors with the background to understand racial and ethnic issues. Efforts should be made to encourage the training of teachers from under-represented racial and ethnic groups, recruitment of volunteer and assistant teachers from under-represented racial and ethnic groups, aggressive recruitment of qualified teachers from under-represented ethnic and racial groups, and hiring high-achieving students from under-represented racial and ethnic groups as paid teaching aides.

The above recommendations propose essential foundations not only to implementing this plan, but to continually develop and renew our schools. Staff must be trained and updated. Investments must be made in equipment and facilities to avoid obsolescence.

Improve Planning, Coordination and Linkage

The major challenge of creating a "system" of educational options is to find ways to integrate and coordinate options. Options must reinforce each other in supporting common educational standards. They must enable students to move easily among options to meet their needs.

The major challenge of creating a "system" of educational options is to find ways to integrate and coordinate options.

The types of planning, coordination and linkage proposed in this plan are different from the common view of these activities. Emphasis is placed on the design, development and maintenance of an accountability-driven infrastructure that gives schools, teachers and students substantially greater freedom to pursue "core" educational goals.

[17] **State and Local Planning Councils.** Planning Councils should be established at state and local levels to recommend long-term approaches for coordinating and integrating educational options. Existing bodies should be modified or new councils created to include representatives of business, labor, students, parents, community organizations, and all major educational options. These councils should also develop ways to access community support services to support educational goals and standards. Finally, they should provide a forum for initiatives to think systematically about educational options and the long-term future of high schools.

[18] **Integrated Data System for Programs and Individuals.** A data system to facilitate planning, counseling and accountability among educational options should be developed. The system should help students and educators by giving access to comparable information about educational options, maintain student transcripts in a standardized format, store and provide restricted access to selected non-school data on students, modernize routine student intake and processing to ease the task of record keeping, generate comprehensive data on students (*e.g.* program participation, demographic characteristics, and educational achievement), and meet compliance needs by consolidating samples of student data stripped of identifying information.

[19] **Linkage of Support Resources.** Local Educational Agencies, the California Department of Education and other state agencies should undertake a joint initiative to orchestrate the delivery of cross-agency services that will support students' educational achievement. This initiative should establish cross-agency procedures to provide case management and support services to students.

[20] **Encourage Parental Involvement.** Schools, parents and employers must work to encourage parental involvement. Parents should participate in the development and approval of their child's Personal Education Plan **(PEP)**. The role of teachers should be realigned to allow the time and resources to encourage parents and students to achieve common goals. Adult schools should provide "mini-courses" to assist parents in supervising homework, working with teachers, understanding the school system, and accessing support services. Business and school districts should provide time off and work scheduling options that allow employees to attend parent-teacher conferences. Efforts should be made to arrange representation from social agencies at schools so that parents have "one-stop" access to education and support services.

[21] **Business Compacts to Support Jointly Determined Educational Standards.** The State Superintendent of Public Instruction and local superintendents should work with business leaders to establish state and local compacts to support educational standards. These compacts should involve representatives of all major public and private employer groups, including small business. Members should work jointly to specify the skills and educational attainment needed for successful entry into the workforce, and solicit broad-based support among employers to integrate educational standards into firm hiring policy.

As noted previously, the twenty-one recommendations proposed in this report have been developed to achieve multiple payoffs toward the five goals of increasing accountability, developing a

system of quality educational options, facilitating student choice, enhancing staff and program support, and improving planning and coordination. While each recommendation has a focused impact toward one of these goals, all have been designed to support other goals.

How Options Can Meet Common Goals

When integrated, the recommendations proposed by this plan will foster long-term excellence and responsiveness by empowering students and parents as consumers in a market place of educational options that are held accountable to measures of performance based on what students learn.

Tomorrow's school system should be built upon a system of educational options within which individual students choose how they intend to meet "core" learning requirements and pursue electives.

The most important issue is how this plan will serve students and our state in the coming years. A general overview of how the proposed system will work follows:

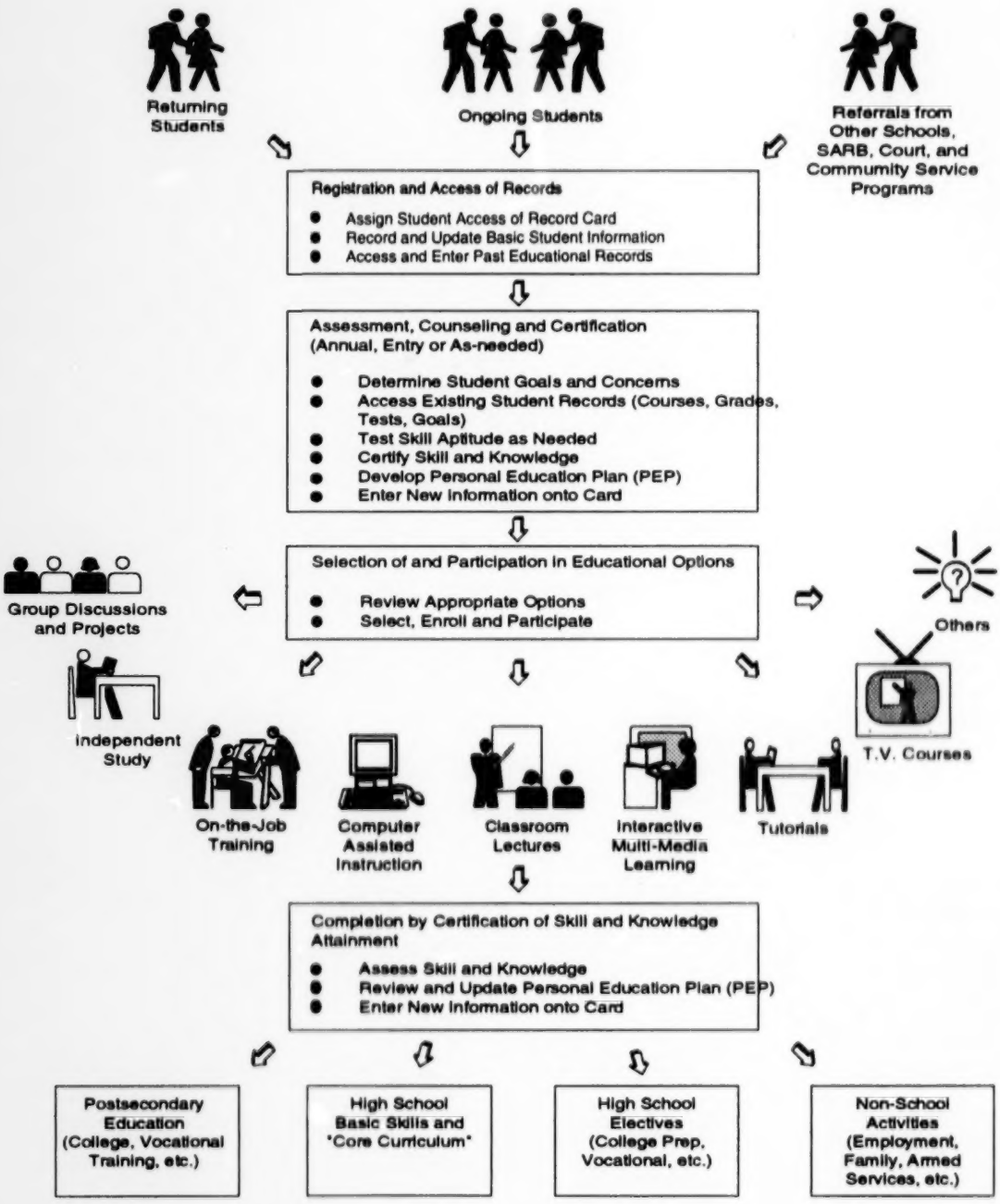
> Tomorrow's school system should be built upon a system of educational options within which individual students choose how they intend to meet "core" learning requirements and pursue electives. From the standpoint of the individual student, high school education is organized through a ***Personal Education Plan (PEP)*** developed regularly through ***Comprehensive Counseling, Placement and Certification Services***. These services will be staffed by trained counselors and supported by an ***Integrated Data System for Programs and Individuals***. This data system will provide information about available educational options and cumulative records on each student. Each student will also be given a ***Student Access Card***. These credit card-like devices will have embedded memory chips to electronically store the ***Personal Education Plan*** and other records (test scores, courses completed, demographic characteristics, digitized portfolios of exemplary work, *etc.*) for each student. Standard card readers will allow these data to be accessed by other programs, schools, colleges and possibly employers.

Upon entry into the school system, each student checks in at the ***Comprehensive Counseling, Placement and Certification Service***. If the student is returning or transferring from another school, the counselor will use the student's existing ***Student Access Card*** to access existing records. If the student is entering for the first time, he or she is interviewed for basic background and educational goals, then given a ***Student Access Card***. It is also likely that new students will be given a number of assessment tests to determine educational achievements. This will guide the counselor's efforts to assist him or her to review and select educational options. Returning or transferring students will presumably have existing records and test scores on their ***Student Access Card***. Depending upon their specific goals or circumstances, it may or may not be necessary to conduct new tests or assessments. New information for returning students will be recorded onto the student's card and interactively entered into the ***Integrated Data System*** **(Exhibit 5.2)**.

Once assessments determine the needs of the student, a combination of counseling and interactive information technology is used to provide an impartial overview of educational options that may meet the needs and learning styles of the individual student. This will include information such as the educational objectives of the option, modes of instruction, duration and scheduling, location, special features, assessments of past performance, and certification status in accord with state and regional ***"Core Curriculum" for All Educational Options***. Once educational options are presented and discussed, the individual student selects the program that best meets his or her educational goals and preferred mode of learning. "Electronic enrollment" is simultaneously recorded in the ***Integrated Data System*** and on the student's card and the student is referred to the program **(Exhibit 5.2)**.

Exhibit 5.2

How Students Would Receive Services


Returning Students
Ongoing Students
Referrals from Other Schools, SARB, Court, and Community Service Programs
Registration and Access of Records
Assign Student Access of Record Card
Record and Update Basic Student Information
Access and Enter Past Educational Records
Assessment, Counseling and Certification (Annual, Entry or As-needed)
Determine Student Goals and Concerns
Access Existing Student Records (Courses, Grades, Tests, Goals)
Test Skill Aptitude as Needed
Certify Skill and Knowledge
Develop Personal Education Plan (PEP)
Enter New Information onto Card
Selection of and Participation in Educational Options
Review Appropriate Options
Select, Enroll and Participate
Group Discussions and Projects
Others
Independent Study
T.V. Courses
On-the-Job Training
Computer Assisted Instruction
Classroom Lectures
Interactive Multi-Media Learning
Tutorials
Completion by Certification of Skill and Knowledge Attainment
Assess Skill and Knowledge
Review and Update Personal Education Plan (PEP)
Enter New Information onto Card
Postsecondary Education (College, Vocational Training, etc.)
High School Basic Skills and "Core Curriculum"
High School Electives (College Prep, Vocational, etc.)
Non-School Activities (Employment, Family, Armed Services, etc.)

Over time, it is expected that ***Policies that Support Educational Options to Enhance Student Achievement*** will lead to a variety of programs that allow students choices that ***Support and Enhance the "Core Curriculum."*** These options should provide varied modes and contexts for learning "core curriculum," as well as alternatives for studying elective topics. Many options would initiate ***Modes of Instruction to Match the "Information Era"*** by replacing passive classroom teaching with technology-supported interactive and individually driven learning. Under these conditions teachers would function as "coaches" and "discussion leaders." In some cases, the traditional course system might be replaced by ***Technology-Supported Learning Centers***, which provide a variety of options for pursuing "core requirements" and electives (*e.g.* mathematics and science, humanities, civics and social science, physical education). Students seeking to satisfy "core requirements" could attend a center where they might use lectures, discussions, interactive computers, video resources, independent study or authorized offsite experiences. All these modes would require students to master topics that later would be certified by skill and knowledge assessment tools that ***Measure Program Performance by What Students Learn***. Use of such tests would move education out of a "seat time" orientation and create overall scheduling flexibility. This would ***Make Secondary Education a Stage of "Lifelong Learning"*** **(Exhibit 5.2)**.

Upon completion of courses or programs by students, the prescribed cost for participation and test scores are entered into the ***Integrated Data System*** as a prerequisite for final payment to the school district and certification of skills for the student. The system designed to ***Provide Funding Incentives for Program Performance*** and ***Linkage of Funding to Individual Students in Accord with Needs*** would provide bonus payments for agreed-upon excellence in skill achievement by students and for special services based on the "categorical" needs of individual students **(Exhibit 5.2)**.

The essential organizing principle for this system of educational options would be the ***Comprehensive Counseling, Placement and Certification Services***. Major commitment would be given to monitoring and guiding each student by ongoing review, discussion and updating of ***Personal Education Plans*** **(PEPs)**. This process would occur regularly every year or half year, or when transfer or special circumstances dictate. This process will be expedited by time and labor saving technologies such as the ***Student Access Card*** and ***Integrated Data System***. A key goal of this information system would be to insure that students are not lost as they move among programs, within school districts or across the state.

The above process and supporting components are intended to make schools flexible centers of learning in which each student can pursue different roads to an individual future, based upon mastery of "core" skills and knowledge. It is intended to use information technology to increase the capacity of schools, to communicate the options available to students, coordinate programs and students, and increase local school flexibility by substituting learning standards for time and place compliance requirements.

Is It Possible?

Is it possible to implement the types of changes advocated in this chapter? Yes, but not overnight.

Everything proposed in this chapter is possible today. Nonetheless, it will take time and adequate resources. The barriers to implementation are not simply technical. These proposals are new ideas, and therefore vulnerable to misunderstanding and confusion. Even if there were unquestioned support and generous resources for development and implementation, the task would take many years.

The success of a plan such as this depends heavily upon the development of a problem-solving partnership among stakeholders.

The proposals in this plan are an image of the future—essentially a working hypotheses to guide current efforts to improve services and outcomes. All of its component proposals may not be implemented by the 21st Century. But we cannot have a better educational system tomorrow if we do not put our best ideas forward today. And our best ideas of today will not become the realities of tomorrow unless we marshall commitment and resources to the task of making them work.

CHAPTER

6 Steps to Tomorrow

The recommendations of this plan can be brought to fruition by building incrementally with a long-term vision and working through a partnership of key stakeholders.

There are two essential prerequisites for implementing this plan. First, resources and technical skills must be marshalled to develop a workplan for implementing the proposed recommendations. Second, a spirit of cooperation and commitment must be developed among key stakeholders.

Building the Future on Today's Foundation

The purpose of this plan, as well as the advisory and outreach process that produced it, has been to determine the long-term needs of California youth, develop comprehensive responses to these needs, then work backward to determine the steps that must be taken to implement such a response.

We propose that this plan be implemented incrementally—in steps designed to produce real results and in ways that are compatible with long-term goals and recommendations.

The primary task of implementing this plan must take place where students learn—the school. We propose that this plan be implemented incrementally—in steps designed to produce real results and in ways that are compatible with long-term goals and recommendations. Specifically, compatible innovations within today's schools should be blended with the recommendations of the plan to develop "first steps" toward implementation. Action should be focused in three areas:

- **Select and Organize Pilot Sites.** The California Department of Education (CDE) should select a limited number of pilot sites from school districts with a commitment to implement the recommendations of this plan. School-level workshops should be provided to explain the plan and identify practical areas for "first step" implementation.

- **Pilot Site Implementation of "First Steps."** Pilot sites would establish Local Planning Councils comprised of educators, business leaders, parents and other community stakeholders. These councils would organize broad-based support and involvement, and plan the specific implementation of "first steps."

- **State Support.** The California Department of Education should support the strategic planning process by using resources to move forward on recommendations that either require state leadership or merit state involvement to obtain "economies of scale" (*e.g.* definition of "core curriculum," design of standardized performance measures). It should also provide staff and convening resources to facilitate communication and sharing among pilot sites, and prepare reports and resource materials on the "first steps" to disseminate to interested schools.

At the end of the first step stage, working models of initial actions should be established, and information about the nature and impacts should be disseminated among interested stakeholders.

Information about the success or failure of "first steps" and new ideas stimulated by the "first step" process should be integrated into the planning of future action. This will require the involvement of state and local educational agencies, and the participation of all major stakeholders.

An Alliance for Quality Education

Agreement must be forged among key stakeholders before meaningful movement can begin toward the proposed strategic goals. The concept of participation and cooperation among stakeholders is an

essential theme of this plan. Such a partnership can take many forms. Thus, it is important to outline ground rules for the type of common effort that will be necessary to ensure the success of this plan.

This plan proposes a full partnership among educators, parents, students, business leaders and other stakeholders. The purpose of this partnership is to make educational options a focal element of tomorrow's high schools.

This plan proposes a full partnership among educators, parents, students, business leaders and other stakeholders. The purpose of this partnership is to develop an infrastructure of institutional arrangements and information technologies that will improve the content and delivery of educational services. It may not be possible to build comprehensive partnerships at first. However, it is possible to establish working guidelines that will build such participation over time. The key ingredients of such an approach follow:

- Neutral Forum for Collaborative Problem Solving
- Inclusion of "All" Key Stakeholders in Joint Ventures
- Linkage between State and Local Stakeholders
- Fact-Based Problem Solving and Planning Process
- Flexibility to Recognize and Involve New Stakeholders

The ultimate success of this plan depends upon the development of an open and fair partnership that combats defensiveness and polarization among those holding a stake in the education of youth.

Tomorrow Is Made Today

In many ways, this plan addresses issues beyond the mechanical arrangements it proposes. It is also intended to provide a crisp and exciting image of what education can be and, we hope, invigorate widespread commitment to learning.

The initiatives proposed in this plan are far-reaching and innovative. Further, they have been developed with an eye to the technological resources that will be available and affordable in coming years. Despite the far reaching nature of this plan, every recommendation set forth is both affordable and technically possible today.

Stakeholders in the future of secondary education—whether they be education providers, businesses, parents, students or concerned citizens— must develop a collective will to act today to meet the educational needs of tomorrow.

Technical skill and resources will be critical to achieving these goals. However, they are not the most critical ingredient. The most essential ingredient will be the ability of our state to meet wide-scale educational needs with an equally wide-scale response. Stakeholders in the future of secondary education—whether they be education providers, businesses, parents, students or concerned citizens—must develop a collective will to act today to meet the educational needs of tomorrow.

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